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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - POLITICIANS COMMENT ON U.S. HOUSE
RESOLUTION

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The nonbinding resolution on Bosnia (H.R. 171) passed on May 12 by the U.S. House of Representatives provoked much commentary by Bosnian politicians, most of it along predictable lines. Bosniak and Croat politicians generally praised the resolution, saying it demonstrated increased U.S. engagement and a desire to support Bosnian constitutional reform. Serb politicians were critical, many saying the resolution, which focused on the need for constitutional reform, was the product of lobbying by the Bosniak community in the U.S. END SUMMARY

Bosniaks and Croats Welcome the Resolution

¶2. (SBU) Husein Nanic, a parliamentarian from the Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA), said in a discussion program aired on the Bosnian State-level public television station that the House resolution signifies a more active role for the U.S. in the Balkans. He said domestic politicians would have to develop their own solutions on such issues as a new constitution, but Bosnian politicians would need help from friends in the international community. Bakir Izetbegovic, Vice President of the SDA, also welcomed the resolution and stressed the importance of U.S. engagement in Bosnia. Haris Silajdzic, President of the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH), issued a statement saying that the bill, along with U.S. Vice President Biden's visit to Bosnia, defined plans for more forceful engagement of the United States in Bosnia in order to establish a fully democratic and functional state. SDP President Zlatko Lagumdzia also welcomed the resolution, saying it would result in an American-European partnership in which the U.S. administration would have an active role.

¶3. (SBU) Martin Raguz, Vice President of the Croatian Democratic Union-1990 (HDZ-1990) said the resolution was a welcome development ahead of Vice President Biden's visit, and argued that the resolution clearly identifies constitutional reform as a precondition for Euro-Atlantic integration. Raguz stressed the importance of wide-ranging constitutional reform, saying that simply harmonizing the Constitution with the European Charter on Human Rights would not go far enough. He said the current Constitution is unjust, but questioned the political will to change it.

Serb Criticism

¶4. (SBU) Serb politicians were critical of the resolution, generally stressing that it was a nonbinding resolution and that they would resist any efforts by the international community to impose constitutional reform. Alliance of

Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) President Milorad Dodik said he respects the right of Congress to pass a resolution on Bosnia, but he strongly opposes interference of foreigners in constitutional reform. He said that he would not take part in a constitutional reform process if it is led by anyone from the international community. Republika Srpska President Rajko Kuzmanovic, also from the SNSD, said the resolution is the result of lobbying by destructive forces and "anti-Dayton elements" in the U.S. Dragan Cavic, leader of the Democratic Party, one of the Serb parties in opposition to Dodik, said he is "concerned" about the content of the resolution. He said he opposes the naming a Special U.S. Envoy for the Balkans, and argued that the case made in the resolution for a Special Envoy was a consequence of the failed policies of the ruling coalition and of Dodik's SNSD.

ENGLISH